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### PERSONAL AND SOCIAL REFORM.

It is admitted by all who believe in the Divine origin or spiritual power of Christianity, that this religion is intended to have a twofold operation in the world, as it changes the character of the individual, and as it improves the condition of society. But which of these two results must precede the other, which of them, that is, stands in the relation of cause, and which may be viewed as the effect, is a point on which a difference of opinion has arisen, and particularly of late been expressed with considerable earnestness. By some it is maintained that Christianity must exert a direct action upon social institutions, before it can be expected to control individual life; while others consider the production of personal excellence the first step towards any amelioration of social evils. This is not a question of merely philosophical interest; it has practical bearings that entitle it to attention.

One remark we may make without farther preface,—that the truth will probably be found to lie between the extreme statements, sometimes made by those whose partiality for an opinion renders them blind to its proper restrictions. To deny, for example, the hindrance which corrupt usages and bad institutions oppose to the action of Christianity upon the indi-

vidual mind, is to betray an absurd attachment to theory in the face of numberless facts. This hindrance may amount in effect to a positive barrier, by which the light of Divine truth shall be completely intercepted. How can Christianity reach the children of degradation and misery, who are born, and by the irresistible pressure of social circumstances are kept till they die, in a state of ignorance, which makes some who at this day labor on, or beneath the English soil, inferior in intellectual as well as physical power to their Pagan ancestors? How can Christianity effect an entrance to a heart which from its first pulsations has been stimulated to vicious desire, and surrounded only by the atmosphere of wickedness? Social injustice may disappoint the purposes of Divine mercy. To make no attempt for the abatement of those evils under which portions of society groan and grovel, because Christianity is understood to address itself to the individual soul, is a degree of folly of which no reasonable or conscientious man could be guilty. But, on the other hand to maintain, that the character of the individual must be determined by the condition in which he is placed, is to make man the mere creature of circumstances, and to reduce the power of Divine truth below the force of outward arrangements; which is virtually denying both the moral nature of man, and the spiritual energy of God. Numerous examples too might be quoted from actual life, in contradiction of such a statement. "Oliver Twist" is a fictitious name, but a real character, and Christian piety has burned brightly even amidst the damps of a coal mine.

Without running into any such extravagances, we may entertain the question, whether Christianity should in the first instance be employed as a means of personal or of social regeneration. We have said that this is a practical question; for on the answer which it may receive will depend very much the direction that shall be given to the efforts of philanthropy, and with the answer will vary also our estimation of

the influence which Christian truth may acquire over our own souls. Let us then seek to approach a just answer.

If we look at the early history of our religion as we find it recorded in the New Testament, we cannot but notice that it made the individual the object of its address. Its commands and exhortations, its remonstrances and warnings, its rebukes and its encouragements, its revelations and its influences were pointed at the individual. It aimed at reforming character, which is a personal possession. It awakened the conscience, which has its seat in the breast of the individual. It enjoined repentance, which is a work that each man must undertake and accomplish in his own soul and his own life. It opened the way to perfection, which every one must tread in his own singleness of purpose. When we read the discourses of our Lord, whether in Galilee, as we have them in the narration of Matthew, or at Jerusalem, as preserved by John, we cannot resist the impression that Jesus meant his teaching should act upon the soul in its private exercises, and upon the individual in his personal relations. Any one who shall repeat the Beatitudes, or the whole of the Sermon upon the Mount, or the passages in which Christ speaks of the spiritual life of which he is the Author, or his parting conversation with his disciples, must see, we think, that he intended his religion should work upon and within the individual. That Christianity in its first age aimed at personal regeneration and sanctification, is too plain to need proof beyond what lies in the minds of every one who has read the New Testament. The Apostles, following their Master's example, called men to repentance, to faith, to a new life. They too made religion, in the interest which it claimed, a personal concern, and in the effect which it wrought, an individual experience.

This is rendered the more remarkable by the contrast between Christianity and Judaism. The latter was a social system. It moulded the institutions of the people, determined their civil polity, affected their internal and external relations,

and entered into direct connexion with their forms of social activity. Its worship was national, its precepts contemplated the existence of a certain state of society, its sanctions included public prosperity or calamity. How different is the strain of Christian instruction and promise. Judaism was national, Christianity is personal; Judaism was for a people, Christianity is for the individual.

The persuasion which we derive from the perusal of the New Testament is strengthened by considering that there Jesus is held up as an example. An example, we ask, of what? Of personal character. An example to whom? To each and every disciple, in the acquisition of personal excellence. We never associate the character of our Lord with a peculiar set of institutions, or any one class of social influences. It is the glory of his character, that it retained its purity in a corrupt state of society. While we think of him as constantly engaged in doing good, we do not identify him with a particular mode of beneficence, but rather feel that under all circumstances such a being as he must have been good, and done good, and that in this respect he is an example to us—an example of what each of us should be in the various circumstances of our several positions. To speak of Jesus as the type of a particular state of society, though such an expression may be allowed under the latitude which is given to speech in our day, seems to us proper, and such language to be intelligible, only in view of the final result of Christianity, when all men, or all the members of a community, shall be brought to bear the likeness of Christ.

The negative instruction of Christianity, if we may so designate the instruction to be drawn from its silence, confirms the impression which its positive teaching is suited to make upon the mind. Neither Christ nor his Apostles assailed the institutions of the time in which they lived. So far from this, his words were, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;" while their language was, "The

powers that be are ordained of God ;" "Honor the King ;" "Obey magistrates." No one can doubt that Christianity looked with disapprobation upon the Pagan institutions of which Cæsar was the head, and upon the profligacy which both Heathen and Jewish magistrates exhibited in the administration of their offices. But public revolution was not the end which the Gospel or he by whom it was promulgated had in view, and social reform was an object which he knew, and his Apostles after him knew, could be much more wisely and permanently secured by leading those who composed the community to a higher life, than by expending the strength of heavenly truth in a warfare against the social vices of the age. The conduct and language of our Lord and his Apostles, to which we have now referred, seem to us decisive on this subject.

If however confirmation of the opinion to which the Scriptures lead us be needed, it may be found in the fact to which many persons appear to pay little attention, that society is nothing but an aggregation of individuals. The community is made up of its members, the vices of the community are the vices of its members, the evils under which society reels are the evils which those who constitute society have created or nourished, and which they who compose society must diminish or remove. Society is often described as if it had a will and a conscience of its own ; as if it possessed the attributes which belong to a person. Many are deluded by language of this kind. They entertain the idea, that there is some other accountable agent besides the individual, and they are very willing to throw off upon this creation of rhetoric as large a part as they can transfer of their own errors and sins. Society has no conscience, no will, no responsibility, except in the phrase which uses a convenient figure of speech. Society can do nothing,—can neither form nor express a judgment, can neither introduce nor change any practice, neither maintain nor subvert any institution, whether good or bad,—excepting as they who constitute society, its separate members,

judge, or speak, or act, each one for himself, in his own place and in his own way. As the light which comes from the stars is only the sum of light which they separately shed forth, as the muscular force of the body is the amount of force which resides in the separate fibres of the muscular texture, so the power which society can exert, or the light which it might pour upon the abuses that need exposure, is but the amount of power, the sum of intelligence, which belongs to the individuals who make up society. Society therefore cannot be a subject of reproof or exhortation. Christianity could not call *society* to repent or to be perfect.

When we speak of the action of Christianity upon society, therefore, we mean, if we mean any thing, the action of Christianity upon the individuals who in their collective union—a union which may be an accident or a necessity, and not a matter of choice—who in this their union compose society. It clearly follows, that social abuses can be reached only through the conscience or sensibility of individuals. The only way in which Christianity *can* reform the errors of society is by opening the eyes of individuals to their character. The only way in which it *can* change institutions is by convincing the men who support those institutions that they are pernicious or imperfect; and men can be convinced of a truth, whether speculative or practical, only in their individual being.

Is it said that government can correct these abuses? Government is only the name we give, either to the power which certain persons holding public stations exercise, or to the persons themselves in their collective capacity. We are therefore again reduced to the alternative of enlightening individuals or of accomplishing nothing. Is it said that the will of the majority can amend the evils of the social state? The majority are only the greater number of persons, or more properly, of adult men in the land; and the will of the majority is only the balance which is struck upon a comparison

of all the wills of those who are permitted to have a voice in public affairs,—each of whom must be approached singly by the truth, before the whole, or the greater part can discern and will what is right. Is it said that public opinion controls every thing, and can introduce any change that may be needed? Public opinion is the concurrence of the minds that belong to a community, expressed in certain established and understood ways. Unless these minds are properly instructed and influenced, each in its own action, public opinion can never be made to demand or desire any reform. Christianity therefore *cannot* reach public abuses or social evils, cannot touch a usage or an institution, except through its influence upon individual intelligence, conscience and sensibility.

What then is our inference? That the evils which we deplore are past remedy? Or that we need take no interest in the condition of society? No. Precisely the opposite is our conclusion. And it is because we would point out the only true method of removing these evils, and would lay upon the consciences which ought to feel it the burthen of caring about these things, that we insist upon the impossibility of reforming social errors, except through individual conviction and effort. All that remains for us now is, to show that the conviction and effort of individual minds can be determined by Christianity, only as Christianity shall come into immediate connection with the thought and sentiment of those minds. But this does not need to be proved; for it is evident, and will be disputed by no one. We must be Christians, before we can act as Christians. We must have taken the truth into our souls, before our judgment and endeavor shall be such as truth would dictate.

If therefore we would abate the moral nuisances of society, we must, all and each of us, become true Christians—take the Gospel into our hearts, and have the faith which worketh righteousness. Do we advocate indifference to public evils; insensibility to the crime and wretchedness, the oppression,

fraud, and manifold wickedness, which fill the land with their pestiferous influences and mournful effects? God forbid! Do we counsel any to withhold their sympathy from the benevolence which seeks to elevate the condition of the depressed, or to reclaim the people from the delusions by which they are misled? Again we say, God forbid! No. We would not hinder, but quicken sensibility to the evils which prevail around us, and would show how it may effect the end which it desires. We would clothe a benevolent and Christian purpose with efficiency, by showing that through personal character alone can Christianity approach, much less overcome, the vices that prevail in society.

E. S. G.

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### USES OF DISAPPOINTMENT.

“We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.”

WHAT a revelation of ruined hopes and disappointed expectations these few words contain! Long matured visions of earthly splendor and renown had been laid in the dust by the events of the last few melancholy days. He whom the disciples had followed from the commencement of his career, whom they had loved as a friend and revered as a teacher, and concerning whom they had some dim perceptions of a glory that should yet dazzle the nations with its excelling brightness, had died the lingering death of the cross and was entombed in darkness and silence. The royal robes of their imagining were exchanged for the habiliments of the dead, the kingly palace for the tomb of Joseph, and the shout of triumph for the wail of maternal sorrow.

“We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel!” It would be difficult to express the extent of the disappointment conveyed in this pathetic exclamation.



It was the natural out-pouring of the wounded heart, and the heart alone can respond with the full gushing sympathy excited by deep and genuine emotion. The land of David and Solomon had become a province of Rome, and was now at the mercy of that warlike and stern policy that trampled upon the rights and privileges of the conquered and enslaved. The Roman eagle might penetrate even the Holy of Holies in the sacred temple; and whose hand so adventurous as to stay its flight, or so strong as to fetter the pinions that overshadowed the holy city?

Their synagogues, adorned with all that wealth could purchase or affection bestow, were mercilessly razed to permit the erection of heathen temples; and, subjected to tyranny the most overbearing, and persecution the most cruel, they turned to the hope of a deliverer with the tenacious energy of a desperate people. It was noised throughout Judea, that the Deliverer had at length appeared; and cruel must have been the prostration of their long cherished hopes, when it was known that the wail of his helplessness ascended from a manger, and that his humble mother, alarmed for his personal safety, had fled into Egypt. We can almost see the lip of scorn and hear the tones of derision with which such tidings were received, coupled with the name of Israel's long-expected Messiah. And probably the wonderful accompaniments of his birth had passed from the minds of men, when he again drew the attention of his countrymen by his doctrines and miracles.

Again the star of hope hovered over his pathway, and many, very many believed that he would exercise his astonishing powers in behalf of his enslaved, insulted nation. He declared that his kingdom was not of this world; but his words fell powerless upon their benighted understandings, and even the chosen few admitted to his most intimate companionship believed, until he was extended upon the fearful cross, that he would rescue Israel from her Roman oppressors. Before their astonishment had time to expend itself, or their sorrow

to lose its sharpness, Jesus stood again among them, victorious over death and ready to ascend to his Father.

How rapid from that hour was the revolution in the minds of the re-collected band of the disciples! They had the satisfaction of once more listening to his solemn and impressive words, and they saw him borne away by invisible hands from scenes of earthly trial and suffering, and they felt that his mission was accomplished. Upon the ruins of expectations that lay so thickly scattered over their mental world, they reared the holier temples of faith, hope, and charity; and, girding on the armor of righteousness, and grasping the banner of self-devotion, they went forth to combat with a world lying in darkness and ignorance. Henceforth they were to be known as the champions of the despised cross, the professed followers of the crucified Nazarene. From the disappointment of their ambitious projects this high and holy determination was born and nurtured into the beauty and strength of maturity.

And we, too, who have revelled in bright anticipations which faded into nothingness, — we who have coveted large possessions, and enjoyed for a brief season and then given to strangers' hands our pleasant heritage, we who have leaned with strong affection and unfaltering trust upon the arm of friendship and then laid the dust upon the brow we loved so well, — we too draw a lesson from the sad ministry of disappointment. With the falling of hope's brightest blossoms there mingle voices of warning and encouragement. The full measure of our confidence cannot be trusted in earthly vessels. Their frail texture cannot bear the precious burden; and while we are garnering up our treasures, the moth and rust corrupt them, the arrow of misfortune touches them, and they lie scattered and wasted.

There is a resting-place for the traveller, though the worldly may not see it; there is an anchor for the soul which the waves of eternity cannot wash away; there is unshadowed

light beyond the regions of sin and sorrow. And the Author and Framer of all this blessedness is God, who invites us by the discipline of his providence, by the warning of his word, by the smile of his fatherly protection, to cast our burden upon Him and be at peace. May he grant us the wisdom wisely to improve our varied lot, so that, like the renewed disciples, we may go forth strong to the conflict with evil, and win at length the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

H. J. W.

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### FIDELITY TO RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS.

A passage occurs in a discourse lately received by us, delivered by Rev. John Kentish, before the Society established in the West of England for promoting Christian Knowledge and the Practice of Virtue by the distribution of Books, which many of our readers, at least those living at a distance from the metropolis, will find to contain useful thoughts.

“For advancing Christian truth and virtue, the Eternal God combines the agency of men of various endowments; the steady, self-denying zeal of one individual, the judgment and discrimination of another, the research and learning of a third, the active talents of a fourth; and, together with such associates and services, men of amiable temper and kind, conciliatory manners; men to whom belongs the power of goodness (an influence far beyond that of merely outward station,) and whose consistent and exemplary characters plead with silent nor unheeded eloquence in favor of the Apostolical doctrine, that ‘to us there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ.’

At this crisis, the duties of Christians and Protestants of our denomination require to be stated with more than usual plainness and fidelity, and to be discharged with no ordinary vigilance. They are included under the exhortation, to ‘maintain the truth in love.’ The world is not ours, nor, in some important respects, the world’s law. Men cast out our name as evil. For the answer of a good conscience towards

God, we meet with social annoyances and privations. In all this there is what a friend of mankind and of his country, a lover of peace and order, and charity and justice, an advocate of truth, and of the inquiry and freedom without which truth can neither be found nor spread abroad, will, on many accounts, lament; in this there is what, at first view, may not only astonish us, but endanger our exercise of angry and ungenerous feelings, in return. They, however, who are familiar with human nature and society, and with the records of the Christian doctrine, and the history of its progress, will scarcely be of opinion that any strange thing has happened to us. He who is earnest in seeking goodly pearls, will be more than content to pay the price of the costliest. If our religious characters are improved, as they may and should be, by labors, sacrifices and trials; if, individually, and as a body, we are the better for them, more resigned to God, more attached to our great Leader and Forerunner, more kindly affectioned and useful to our brethren, how can we murmur at this salutary discipline? Let us even be grateful, when we contrast it with the heavy but well-sustained sufferings of our fathers in what they deemed to be the cause of Truth and Freedom."

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### THE EMIGRANTS.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FREILIGRATH.\*

I cannot take my eyes away  
 From you, ye busy, bustling band!  
 Your little all to see you lay,  
 Each, in the waiting seaman's hand!

Ye men, who from your necks set down  
 The heavy basket, on the earth,  
 Of bread from German corn, baked brown  
 By German wives, on German hearth!

\* The most popular living poet of Germany. See Howitt's *Rural Life in Germany*.

And you, with braided queues so neat,  
Black Forest maidens, slim and brown,  
How careful, on the sloop's green seat  
You set your pails and pitchers down!

Ah, oft have home's cool, shady tanks  
These pails and pitchers filled for you :  
On far Missouri's silent banks  
Shall these the scenes of home renew :—

The stone-rimmed fount in village street,  
That, as ye stooped, betrayed your smiles ;  
The hearth and its familiar seat ;  
The mantle and the pictured tiles.

Soon in the far and wooded West  
Shall log-house walls therewith be graced ;  
Soon many a tired, tawny guest  
Shall sweet refreshment from them taste.

From them shall drink the Cherokee,  
Faint with the hot and dusty chase ;  
No more from German vintage ye  
Shall bear them home, in leaf-crowned grace.

O say, why seek ye other lands !  
The Neckar's vale hath wine and corn ;  
Full of dark firs the Schwarz-wald stands ;  
In Spessart rings the Alp-herd's horn.

Ah ! in strange forests how ye'll yearn  
For the green mountains of your home,  
To Deutschland's yellow wheat-fields turn,  
In spirit o'er her vine-hills roam !

How will the form of days grown pale  
In golden dreams float softly by !  
Like some unearthly, mystic tale,  
'Twill stand before fond memory's eye.

The boatman calls ! go hence in peace !  
God bless ye, man and wife and sire !  
Bless all your fields with rich increase,  
And crown each true heart's pure desire !

## MEANS OF RELIGIOUS GROWTH.

A SERMON, BY REV. JAMES I. T. COOLIDGE.

1 TIMOTHY iv. 15. Meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them.

RELIGION,—its spirit, its hopes, its promises, its bright faith,—is acknowledged to be the one thing, the only thing essential to an immortal soul. We can do without all things beside, without wealth or honor or worldly pleasure, without earthly home, friends, parents; but we cannot do without the aid, support, encouragements of true religion. The difficulty is, that with this assent, men pass it by. The Priest and Levite acknowledged, without doubt, the duty of benevolence, and had exhorted men to its practice; but when the wounded traveller, bound and speechless, appealed by his utter helplessness to their sympathy, they could come and look and pass by on the other side. So is it likewise with men in regard to the essential importance of religion. They come to church, they go where men talk about it, they come and look, but pass by on the other side. They leave the subject where they found it. But there are those to whom it has solemnly and effectively appealed, and who ask with earnest solicitude, how shall it be obtained? How shall we make its spirit pervade and sanctify our hearts and lives? What means shall we employ to engraft religion as a living principle into our characters?

We shall endeavor to answer this question briefly ; though on this matter it is exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to establish any general, universal rules. What has been of service to one heart, may be altogether unsuited to another. What has been the course of one's experience, may not, ought not to be the course of another's. Each one must find what methods are best adapted to his own mind and heart, and faithfully employ them, whether usual or unusual,

whether the course is laid down in books and by the practice of sects, or not. Still, it may be profitable to consider some of the means which may afford us assistance.

And, first, let us well understand and keep before our minds, that the religious character is the result of long and patient cultivation, not of a moment, not of a day's impression, not of strong desires and resolutions only. It is a work of effort, labor and perseverance. We do not mean here to object to, or deny the doctrine of sudden conversion. We believe and teach, that there are moments when a sense of our own sinfulness is borne in upon the soul, and seems to press down upon it with a mountain weight; when the world sinks into its rightful place, and the eternal things of the spirit stand before the soul's unclouded eye, as distinct, solemn and mighty realities; moments when we are nearer the great Soul of the universe, than is man's custom; when God's mercy seems to be more full and freely flowing; when Christ's teaching and death come upon us with an influence we cannot resist; when a solemn experience of sorrow, loss, bereavement, or bright moment is ours; when the Spirit of the Almighty seems to overshadow us, as with a visible presence, and brings us and bows us before the mercy-seat, melted into deep but hopeful contrition. We believe in such moments; we look for them, when the vow of amendment shall be registered in the heart, when the prayer is no formal service, but the outpouring of the feelings which rise and swell in the breast; when the soul, going out of itself, loses itself in its communion with the great Father of all, and is filled with that peace and holy rest which give to the unburdened spirit assurance of the Divine pardon. Again we say, we believe in such moments; we would multiply them for ourselves, and for you, my brethren. May God grant that often his spirit may move over this people, that here as they kneel around this altar, and sing the hymn of praise, or listen to the words of instruction from the preacher's lips, His spirit may

touch the hearts of both preacher and hearer, that they may burn and thrill within them, beating with unwonted aspirations for a holy and divine life. I believe in such moments, when the spirit of the Deity seems nearer to us than is its wont; when we feel it moving upon our hearts, as never, or but seldom before. To deny this, would be to deny the experience of almost every soul that is at all awake to the solemn realities of its being. Still, we would strenuously assert that no such moment—holy, powerful as it is, lifting as it does the whole burden of sin from the soul, and filling it with a peace and rest it has never known before—no such moment is sufficient of itself to change and rebuild the whole character. It may give the first impulse, but does not complete the work. It may lay the foundation, but does not raise the superstructure. It may convert, but does not sanctify. This is the result of long, persevering labor and effort. Step by step, rapidly or not, still step by step must we work our way upwards. By degrees, by here a victory and there a long contested struggle, must the religious principle gain a firm hold in the heart, engraft itself there, and spread its divine influence over the whole character. By remembering this great truth we shall be saved from much discouragement and anxiety. It is sometimes said and oftener thought, that to become religious is, if not an easy, yet a speedy work when once resolutely entered upon; that soon the world may be dislodged and the religious principle grow and pervade the whole man. It is because of this pernicious idea that so many are disheartened. They began the work with a strong will under the Divine impulse, it may be; but they could not gain the whole of what they sought; they could not feel the perfect confidence, the faith, the repose, which they may have seen sometimes exhibited, and which Christianity promises; they could not do all they would; they would not do all they could; and in vexation and sorrow they exclaim, 'We have tried, and tried again; we have resolved, and re-resolved; but almost at the



moment of our resolution, we have fallen away ; we might as well give up the work ; there are some who can accomplish it, but for us it is impossible.'

But stop, my friend ; yield not yet ; start with a new resolution and with a truer knowledge of the work you have to perform. It is a *work*. Forgetfulness of that is the secret of your discouragement and anxiety ; a work to be wrought out in your hearts, to be resolutely begun and resolutely pursued till it is finished, whether that be in this life or the life to come. Remember that the germ of religion which has begun to spring up in your hearts may be but as a "grain of mustard seed, which is the least of all seeds," yet watered, and watched over, it will grow up, though it grow slowly amid the weeds and tares with which the heart is full, till it overspread your whole being. Besides, how long is it that you have suffered your passions, appetites and worldly interests to rule you ? How long have you suffered pride, fashion, miserable frivolity to dwell in your heart ? How long have you been the slave of sin and of the mammon of unrighteousness ? One, or twenty, or fifty years ? And do you suppose the whole of that period is to be erased by one resolution, one prayer, one struggle ? No, to-day and to-morrow, this year, next year, though you may despise the hollowness and vanity of the former objects of your desires, they will be ready to lead you away ; they will arise as tempters in the wilderness, when the heart is open and unguarded ; but every "get thee behind me, Satan," will weaken their power, and retard their return. Be not troubled then, you who have commenced the religious life, if you do not attain at once ; if the peace, the reposing faith and confidence, the same constant upward-looking of the mind and heart, which you may behold in some elder Christian, do not at once fill your breast. Be of good cheer, work on, to-day, and to-morrow, and the third day,—work on, this year and next, and every effort will give new strength for further

effort—new hope, new peace, joy and freedom. This may be called an uncomfortable doctrine ; I cannot help it. I know of no short road to virtue and holiness. And I do not wish to seduce any one by representing the religious life as an easy, indolent life,—the religious character as an easy, unmanly character. To work, and to work against a whole tide of adverse circumstances, is the glory of man. Yes; "*strive* to enter in at the strait gate," says the Saviour,—against trials, temptations, difficulties without and within ; and his disciples should say or think nothing else.

I have dwelt upon this point, because I fear there is an error in the minds of many with regard to it, and because it is fundamental to any inquiry into the means of acquiring the religious character. Let us now briefly consider some of these.

The first that I shall mention is, that we strive to gain a deep conviction of the reality of the great truths of religion. We must study them till they become as real and positive to us as the things of the world. We must learn what they are in themselves and in relation to us, that we may know what we mean when we speak of them. I cannot but feel that here is the difficulty in the minds of many. The mighty and sublime truths of the soul are seldom, if ever, made the subjects of distinct thought and inquiry. I cannot but feel that many use words *only*, when they undertake to speak of God, the soul, heaven, eternity. I see too much levity on the part of men, particularly of young men and young women, with regard to these solemn truths, to have the uncharitableness to think they know what they mean and do. Every where there is this spiritual blindness, and of consequence indifference. The things of the spirit are supposed to exist in some dream-land ; the truths of religion are supposed to be airy nothings, fictions. Before then we can be religious men, these truths must be brought out of their mistiness and vagueness, must be seen and felt to be present realities, now, in this world, concerning life, not death, earth, not heaven.

They must stand before the soul distinctly, as the things of this world before the outward eye. How many really know what they mean by God, the soul, sin, salvation? If the question was put, would there not be hesitation, a repeating of much that the outward ear may have heard, rather than a free expression of a clear idea or a deep feeling of the heart? This will not do. No matter how much our feelings may have been moved, no matter how strong a desire may have been excited; before we can gain the religious character, we must gain a knowledge of the truths upon which it is built. So long as God is a distant image, so long as Christ is merely a historical person, who long ago existed, so long as eternity is a word signifying nothing or not much, so long as salvation is a mere word to frighten weak men and women, who will or can go heartily to work in this solemn matter? No; if we would lead a Christian life, if we would possess the Christian character, we must study the truths which religion and Christianity offer to our minds, till they become distinct realities. We must study the solemn subject of God with reverence and devotion, till we feel our souls drawing nearer and nearer to Him, his spirit moving upon our spirits, and lifting them above the world in lofty aspirations, which can alone be satisfied with the living God. We must walk with Him wherever we go. In the sunlight and the mild air, in the cloud and cold, we must see present manifestations of his will towards us. In all the experience of life we must refer back to Him. We must study Him till his glorious perfections shall rise and grow upon our minds and awe us into deep adoration; till He shall be no longer a distant image, but a present reality, here or nowhere, in every life-breath, in every act and thought. We must study Christ, not as having lived, but as now living, now speaking to our sin-diseased souls those words of heavenly promise, now calling to our wearied hearts, "Come unto me," now dying in torture upon the

cross, if by any means our souls might be touched, and by that most affecting testimony of the Father's love for his dying children, cast off the burden of sin, and be cleansed by "that blood of the Lamb." We must dwell upon the vast subject of eternity, till time shall seem to be swallowed up in immensity, and eternity overspread us as the broad arch of heaven.

The seeker after religion, then, must plainly be a man of sober thought and reflection. He must frequently turn aside from the dusty ways of life and indulge in holy meditation and prayer. His rising must be blessed by the morning aspiration to the Father, who has folded him during his slumbers in his all-protecting arms, and with a touch gentle as the morning light awakened him to renewed consciousness. Often as he walks amid the busy throng of men, or quiet and alone, must the great truths of his being be present to his mind. And when the hushed and sober hour of evening comes, again let him meditate upon God, and seek communion with Him who gently draws around the earth the dark curtains of the night. Always and everywhere let him associate himself in spirit with the Almighty, and walk conscious of the wonderful agencies of God's power everywhere around him and of the mighty interests bound up in his soul. And while he thus meditates, the fire will burn, a flame of true devotion will be kindled in his breast, thoughts, emotions, deep feelings will crowd in upon his heart. His whole being will be swayed and penetrated by hopes, desires, joys, such as he knew not of, and such as can only be known by the soul's experience. And then, my friends, when your hearts are full, or when they are but stirred as by the slightest breath of heaven, grieve not the holy spirit of God; quench not the sacred flame just kindled on the altar of your hearts; give vent, expression to the emotions that have been excited. Let them have free course and flow out in the language of praise and prayer. Fall upon your knees before

your God, who has thus testified of his presence ; lift up your souls for more of his spirit, open your hearts to its influences, that shall descend as the gentle rain ; pray for a deeper love, for a more real conception of eternal truths, for a stronger consciousness of your eternal destiny. Be not extravagant, heap not up epithet upon epithet, magnify not your sinfulness beyond what you feel. Be sincere before God and your own soul. Express to Him the feeling as it is in your own heart, and your prayer will not fail to be heard, and your feeling, whatever it may be, to be deepened and sanctified. I greatly fear that we do not suffer the religious feeling, excited by any experience, to have an outlet. We are too apt to repress it both before God and man. Believe me, we do thereby great wrong to our own souls, and grieve the holy Spirit. Resist no feeling that leads to prayer, but often by prayer seek to awaken and sustain all holy desires and emotions. Fail not in this, my brethren, you who would begin and persevere in the work of building up a religious character. You who would have religion, Christianity, not a name, and belief, but a reality and a life—begin and end with prayer. Let your chambers be your oratories, where in an humble, fervent, genuine spirit you lay your whole hearts bare before your God. A religious man, a Christian, without prayer, is an impossibility. Seek your God, brethren, in private as well as in public, and around the domestic altar. Tell him of your wants, your desires, your trials, your doubts and fears. And He who heareth prayer will answer you in the peace, strength, confidence which shall fill your souls. Seek your God, before you seek your business, before you engage in the active duties of life, and you cannot easily, without a struggle, submit to the temptations and sins of the world.

Once more, if we would cultivate the religious spirit in our hearts, let us seek the aid and encouragement of friends engaged in the same great work, to aid them by our light, and be animated by theirs ; that our hopes may cheer

their despondency, that their faith may dissipate our doubts. I know it is the nature of deep feeling to seek retirement. I know that there is a joy and a grief with which the stranger intermeddled not, that there are emotions, experiences, which are between a man's own soul and his God, which it would be almost desecration to bring out before the eye of the unsympathizing world. But here a caution is to be observed. Let us not push this diffidence, this love of secrecy, too far, lest the emotion die. I would not have one proclaim it at corners of the streets, and call all men to bear witness. No; let the new seeker of religion encourage and support the young desire of his heart, by reading, meditation, and prayer. On this he must depend. But I would have him also seek some friend, or friends, into whose sympathizing hearts he can pour the emotions which dwell in his own, that they may grow by the new food they feed upon. Is it not too often the case, that our feeble resolutions have failed for the want of this sympathy? I fear so. But I may not pursue this point. Let me only say in fine, let your religious purposes have some vent, some manifestation, somewhere and somehow; let religion characterize your conversation with your families, with your friends, let it throw its spirit over the whole business and intercourse of life. That is to say, live upon the truths of religion, as far as you know them, aided by the impulse the study of those truths has given your hearts; live upon them, as you have lived upon the truths of this world. As they have animated you, so let these. Then shall they become experimental, we shall know them by having lived them.

Religion, my friends,—we need no argument to prove it,—religion we all acknowledge to be no fiction, no dream, but all essential, and alone essential to an immortal soul. We need it beyond all things beside, we need it to support the heart under the experience of life, to soothe our griefs, to sustain and sanctify our pleasures. I have sought to direct

your thoughts to the means of its culture. Meditate upon these things, give your minds wholly to the subject. Leave it not here, carry it to your homes, ponder it there with your Bibles open before you. Let God speak to you from the book of *his word*. Let Christ speak to you from the record of his life. Bend in prayer that your feeble resolutions may be strengthened, that the insensibility of your hearts may be dissolved in love of him and his pure service. So do, to-day, to-morrow and every day that God spares your life; and then, and then only, shall your names be written in the Lamb's book of life.

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### LABOR.

It would be a task of some interest to trace to their origin the absurd notions that have prevailed, and that still prevail to so great an extent, in regard to manual labor. But such is not our present purpose. It is enough to know that they spring from a corrupt and degenerate taste. It is enough to say that an idea of the true dignity of labor, however long forgotten, has begun to be awakened into life,—not to die, we trust, until its healing power shall have been felt through the world. Whatever may be thought of a thousand theories, in the adoption of this one principle by the mass of mankind,—that labor is natural to man, necessary to his highest welfare, and so honorable—we discern an element of sure progress.

One would suppose that an observation of the Power which is constantly at work around, above and beneath us, might have taught man, if analogy can teach him any thing, that he too must labor, that he was made for it, and that he cannot accomplish the true end of his existence without it. Yet unfortunately, while ignorance has prevented the mass from discovering their real position, those possessed of knowledge,

wealth and power have been lending their influence, some times perhaps unconsciously, but in too many instances willingly, to depress the real workers of the world and teach them to despise themselves.

Take as an example the poet Cowper,—a man whose ear was ever open to the great call of humanity, and who certainly had a keen sense of some of the wrongs which man inflicts upon his fellow. Yet even Cowper shows himself to have been not entirely free from such a false prejudice, when he claims for the man of leisure as he is pleased to call him, exemption from work

“That asks robust, tough sinews, bred to toil,  
*Servile employ*,”—

And asks for him only

——“Such as may amuse,  
Not tire, demanding rather skill than force.”

Perhaps he never considered the blighting effect which that single sentence might have on the heart of many an Englishman who, though poor, had supposed himself a free man, because not obliged to eat his bread beneath another's roof, but able to earn it with his own hard hands. No doubt Cowper was a great admirer of rural life, and held frequent and high communings with nature. But had he questioned her more closely still, he would perhaps never have uttered that mistaken sentiment. She would have told him that man is but a co-worker with her; that when he throws his seed into the soil, or rears a forest of trees, he is but facilitating her operations; that but for this very “servile employ,” he had never seen “there given the length of colonnade” beneath whose “deep prolixity of shade” he often wandered, and where he found at least a portion of that inspiration that has never ceased to charm, refine and elevate. She could have told him that in the deep bed of the ocean she was forming, by imperceptible accumulations, her coral reefs, foundations



for other continents. She could have taken him to unfrequented caves, her favored palaces, where she delights to toil unseen, moulding forms of beauty and of grandeur that are the slow but ceaseless product of ages. She might have pointed him to the heavens above us, where a force is felt all too mighty for our finest conceptions. And yet more, she could have told him that in all of these might be seen the confirmation of that sublime truth uttered by the Prophet of Nazareth, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" and that man's labor, even the most severe, if expended on a purpose of good, is akin to all of her's. "Labor, the most important, because the truest social fact, asks for the deepest consideration. Labor, the glory and the destiny of every living man, must receive the thought and the duty it demands. Its results are always illustrious, however humble."

H. G. T.

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"THY SINS ARE FORGIVEN."

LUKE, VII: 48.

She passes through the palace gates  
Amidst the crowded throng;  
She lists not to the festal strains  
Which fill the air with song.

Bright forms of beauty crowd the hall,  
With many a noble guest;  
She heeds not, sees not, feels alone  
That earth is not her rest.

She seeks for him who came to save,  
She hears his voice from heaven;—  
"Thy love hath saved thee," child of earth!  
Rejoice, "thou art forgiven!"

L. G. P.

## CHRIST'S WORDS AT THE WELL OF SAMARIA.

THIS account of Christ's interview with the woman of Samaria is covered with the brightest proofs of reality. It has that air of naturalness and sincerity, which none but a truth-loving spirit can breathe over its narratives. In a chance moment, by the wayside, while the Saviour sat him down upon a well-stone in the heat of a summer noon, there were uttered to a simple drawer of water some of the loftiest precepts, the sublimest principles, to which the world has ever lent its ear. In the familiarity of that easy conversation appeared the nature of this new kingdom, which a Prophet out of Nazareth was to establish in the heart of nations. Words were spoken in that brief moment that have been living ever since, that have travelled down through ages, changing the aspect of human affairs, and covering the earth with civilized inhabitants and temples of worship. Words were spoken to one woman which have filled the souls of millions of strong men, and have given them a faith by which they have lived in suffering, and a hope by which they have died with joy. Nothing has been able to erase them from the memory or the written history of mankind. Once declared from the great Teacher's lips, they have possessed an energy and inherent life which no hostility, no power has been able to crush out of being. Words were spoken by that footpath in Samaria, which have spread beyond the country of Samaritan and Jew, passing to the earth's farthest boundary; and what was there said in familiar talk has been repeated in all forms of speech. It has been fervently written, sung in transports, eloquently preached, and mused upon in the stillness of secret meditation. Unless there had been truth under these words, higher than all other, adapted to man as God has made him, and inspired by God himself, such could not have been their fate, their effects, their history.

Here were words, to repeat and believe which cost men distinction and life; which frowned on their interests and

rebuked their ambition, which made war on ignorance and superstition, and met every where discussion and inquiry. Yet they spread from mouth to mouth, and from heart to heart, silently establishing themselves in strongholds whence they never could be dislodged. It is through other and less simple means and instrumentalities, that the inventors and propagators of false beliefs have gained their results, and established their dominion. Passion and power, not silent conviction and faith, have been the agencies by which they have marred the progress of great principles and sullied the fair records of humanity.

What an influence, too, have these teachings upon ourselves! Strive as we will, we cannot, when we have once listened to them, drive them back, thrust them away, and be as if they had never reached us. We may resist them, because they are too pure for our unholiness to receive; because their strength rebukes our weakness, and their simplicity puts to shame our insincere and fruitless lives. Yet in some better moment they will come back, for they are true and faithful, and conscience, when it has once heard them, uses them for its own solemn language. They will come either to comfort or to reproach us. If we have been giving our thoughts to unrighteous uses, and have suffered the world to tamper with our innocence, if malignant passions, hatred, envy, jealousy, sensuality, have darkened our daylight, if dishonest gain has filled our coffers with gold, but our conscience with remorse, then they will indeed be unwelcome visitants. For they will tell of the best treasures wasted; of follies committed, of pure waters that we have cast away from our thirsty lips, and of polluted streams from which we have drunk pestilence and death. But if we have labored only for things just and good, true and holy, hearts at peace with themselves and a generous love for those who pass with us through these scenes of trial, then they will refresh and cheer us, like the memory of voices dear in childhood, like a repeated strain of

half-forgotten music, like good news from a far country, like cold water to a thirsty soul.

For something, something that shall be to him the water of life, every man that cometh into the world must thirst. Where then shall that craving be satisfied, but in the rich, full fountain of Christian truth? Where so perfectly, as by him who yields himself to that truth's control and suffers its fair and holy light to shine in upon his spirit? Where so bountifully as in the instructions and life of him who said divinely, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life?"

Notice the strength of the Saviour's comparison, and let it touch us as it must have touched the woman of Samaria. It was in a region where wells and water-springs were the purchased, inherited and valued possessions of families and tribes;—a land in which the way-worn pilgrim pressed eagerly on to the spot where fountains made the earth green; where the minstrel king had once cried out, 'O that one would give me water of the well,' and had then turned it out as 'the most precious offering to his great Deliverer; where, too, he had drawn the poetic images for his unequalled melodies, of water-brooks and well-springs; where the captive Israelites pictured the glories of their expected freedom as 'drawing water with joy from the wells of salvation,' and as being guided by the great Shepherd 'even by the springs of water.' There Jesus reclined, by one of these wells which the ancient Patriarch Jacob had digged,—Jesus, himself worn and weary with the sultry burning of a mid-day sun. How must the woman have listened with amazement, when he spake lightly of the cool draught, and intimated that there was a hidden fountain of which this was but a feeble emblem! May the meaning of his words grow stronger and deeper within us, till that fountain springs up in our hearts into everlasting life!

## INTELLIGENCE.

ORDINATION AT GRAFTON, MASS.—Mr. Edmund Burke Willson, of the class last graduated from the Theological School at Cambridge, was ordained on Wednesday, January 3, 1844, as Minister of the First Congregational (Unitarian) Society in Grafton. The services were as follows:—Introductory Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Barry of Framingham; Reading of the Scriptures, by Rev. Mr. May of Leicester; Sermon, by Rev. Professor Noyes of Cambridge; Ordaining Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Hill, of Worcester; Charge, by Rev. Mr. Willson of Montague; Right Hand of Fellowship, by Rev. Mr. Weiss of Watertown; Address to the People, by Rev. Mr. Palfrey, late of Grafton; Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Miles of Lowell.

The Sermon was from 1 Corinthians ii, 2:—"For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." 1. The Christian minister is to preach the *truth* of Christ. He is to seek his success in this. It was this upon which the Apostles relied. He should preach the whole of Christian truth. His preaching should unite harmoniously, as Christ united them, the truths of doctrine and practice. 2. He should preach on the *authority* of Christ. The minister who does otherwise has no fair claim to the peculiar title of *Christian*. Without this, the light of nature is feeble. With it, one may draw from nature or reason stores of illustration and argument. 3. He should preach in the *spirit* of Christ, with Christ's strong, unwearied, and hopeful *faith*, with his fearless and true spirit. Still, he should mingle *prudence* with his boldness. His aim should be to establish sound and healthful principles of action. Above all, he must be ruled and guided by a spirit of *love*.

ORDINATION AT DEERFIELD, MASS.—Mr. James Blodgett, of the class which graduated at the Divinity School in Cambridge in July last, was ordained as Minister of the First Society in Deerfield, on Wednesday, January 17, 1844. The order of exercises was as follows:—Introductory Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Ellis of Northampton;

Selections from Scripture, by Rev. Mr. Everett of Northfield; Sermon, by Rev. Mr. Frost of Concord; Ordaining Prayer, by Rev. Dr. Willard of Deerfield; Charge, by Rev. Mr. Pierpont of Boston; Right Hand of Fellowship, by Rev. Mr. Willson of Grafton; Address to the People, by Rev. Mr. Wellington of Manchester, N. H.; Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Harding of New Salem.

Mr. Frost took for his text the 12th verse of the ivth chapter of the Epistle to Hebrews:—"For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The preacher's weapon must be the Divine word—truth in its perfection—truth as it dwelt in, and was set forth by Jesus, the Way, Truth, and Life, the Wisdom of God. This weapon must be kept sharp and bright. Truth must not be corrupted, and it must be fearlessly applied. '*Thou art the man,*' must accompany the parable. The word, though seemingly of small account,—and not associations, or mechanical contrivances of any sort,—is the edifying power.

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THURSDAY LECTURE.—The repairs on the First Church, in Chauncy Place, having been completed,—and they have certainly resulted in an appearance of great elegance, to say nothing of the old author's other two requisites of good architecture, "Commoditie" and "Firmnesse,"—this Lecture, suspended on account of these repairs since last May, was resumed on the 14th of December. An appropriate discourse was preached on that occasion by Rev. Mr. Waterson, of the Pitts Street Chapel, from the words:—"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." The history of this ancient institution was sketched, and reasons were offered for a general attendance upon it. It is exceedingly gratifying to be able to say that the force of such reasons seems to be felt. On every Thursday since that referred to, the audience has been highly respectable. There is a manifest purpose, on the part both of the people and the ministry, to impart and preserve to these services the spirit, and thus the value, that belong to them.

**SOCIAL REORGANIZATION.**—Notices appeared in most of the city papers, in the month of December, to the following effect:—‘A Convention of the Friends of Social Reorganization will take place in Boston, commencing on the 26th inst., in the Tremont Chapel. All the advocates of Reform are urged to come to this Convention, as the subject is deemed one of vast importance, and it is believed the discussions will be exceedingly able and interesting.’ The Convention did take place, and the prediction in the latter part of this advertisement turned out to be not wholly inaccurate. The “ability” was undeniably mingled with considerable folly, and the “interest” was modified by a good deal of disgust. The truth is, the projectors and principal conductors of this movement are men of high purpose, generous hearts, a manly temper and no servile minds. It is their misfortune to be followed and embarrassed by some very weak, troublesome, idle and noisy persons, who avail themselves of the largest liberty of speech, on an occasion like this, and impede grievously the transaction of any important business, and the progress of any dignified discussion. However, these obstacles were patiently endured, and in some measure, at last, removed. The Convention continued several days, and the general subject of Association, life in communities, was agitated with distinguished zeal. The more prominent speakers were W. H. Channing, George Ripley, Albert Brisbane, Adin Ballou, Mr. Dana, W. L. Garrison, A. B. Alcott, (who informed the meeting that civilization had *done its work*,) and J. H. Collins. The last gentleman appeared to be the only advocate of an actual community of property. He has made an experiment with his theory at Skeneateles, N. Y., which, according to his opponents’ argument and his own confession, must be a failure. Delegates were present from the various Communities already established. The Convention was followed by a series of Lectures on the doctrines of Fourier.

The ground taken by the followers of Fourier, and the friends of Association here, is that of protest against the present social system. They feel deeply the social evils and injustices we are laboring under, and they are ready to toil heartily for their reformation. This reformation, however, they contend, cannot be, except we reconstruct society from the foundation. Free competition in trade, hired labor, the present commercial arrangements, are all pronounced hostile to, and absolutely inconsistent with, any thing like a just and

healthful condition of social or moral life. War, intemperance, slavery, impurity, are evils that have a social origin. To society therefore we must look for a remedy. As a nation we are emancipated from the *political* errors of the old world ; but the *social* errors we have transplanted and preserved. These are inconsistent with the nature of a Republic, as they are with the nature of man, and not till we come upon the basis of Association can we exhibit the spectacle of a free, happy, or Christian people. The mistake, and the whole fearful danger, it seems to us, is in placing the origin of these evils in that intangible thing called society, instead of the individual heart. We have no faith in smoothing down the path for virtue to walk in, and strewing it with roses. Such a virtue as will only go where thus enticed, is not the kind we stand in need of.

We know how difficult it is, where there is such a wide difference of views, to say what opinion precisely represents the majority, or the movement. But if there is any thing like a general tendency towards ideas that are set forth in an article in a late number of the *Dial*, written by a supporter of the Community doctrine, we think it quite time that this subject should be understood and spoken to, and thought upon. The article contains the following significant sentence, " If the associative life be true, then is the separate family a false arrangement ;" and the succeeding passage is, in equally distinct and intelligible terms, to the same effect.

CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES.—This Church, under the pastoral charge of Rev. J. F. Clarke, has hitherto held its meetings usually in Amory Hall. During the last month it has removed to the Masonic Temple. The former worshiping place was found to be of too narrow dimensions. It is so situated, too, as to be exposed to a great deal of inconvenience from the noise of the streets. While making this change, Mr. Clarke's Society have also effected another. It was a part of their original plan, that the seats should be open and free to all, and that there should be no distinction either of pews or settees. We find it stated in the *Christian World*, that this method is now to be to a certain extent relinquished. Many persons with families prefer a fixed and permanent position ; and these will be provided with their own seats, according to the general custom.



The rest of the room will be left unappropriated. "Any person will be entitled to a seat who wishes one, and who is a subscriber to the Church, whether in a greater or less amount."

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UNITARIAN SOCIETY IN HARTFORD, CONN.—We learn that steps have been taken for the organization of a Unitarian Society in Hartford, and that there is good reason to expect a satisfactory result.

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UNITARIANISM IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND.—We have received a pamphlet entitled "An Address from the Ministers who met at the Conference held at Taunton, July 17th and 18th, 1843, to the Unitarian Churches of the West of England, with the Resolutions passed at the Conference." Our limits prevent our giving any extracts from the Address; and it is the less necessary, because the larger part is devoted to explaining and advocating the recommendations contained in the Resolutions. The Conference was called for the purpose "of a calm consideration of the present state of [the Unitarian] congregations in the West of England," and from a desire "to establish a more efficient system of union and co-operation among them." Twenty-one ministers were present, including our brother May from Leicester in this neighborhood, who was then travelling abroad. Rev. Henry Acton of Exeter, who has since died, presided; and Rev. William James of Bristol acted as Secretary. We copy the most important of the resolutions, with the exception of one which relates to the evils of Religious Establishments, on which subject our English brethren have reason to feel much more deeply than it is possible that we should feel under the widely different circumstances of our social position. The resolution respecting the Lord's Supper may surprise some of our readers by the suggestion which it offers, in favor of a less frequent celebration of the ordinance.

I.—That the state of religion in our country, and our duty to our faith, which we believe to be emphatically suited to the mental and moral wants of the age, demand a more efficient union, and a more vigorous co-operation among Unitarian ministers and Churches for its support and extension.

II.—That this Conference would recommend the establishment of a *Christian Mission* in the Counties of Somerset, Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall.

III.—That this Conference would suggest the desirableness of instituting a Ministerial Circuit within the four Counties named in the previous Resolution, for the promulgation, at certain stations, of the principles of Christianity.

IV.—That it is desirable to form a Union of the Western Unitarian Churches, to be designated 'the Western Christian Union,' and that it be recommended to the Somerset and Dorset, and the Devon and Cornwall Unitarian Associations, to merge into such Union.

V.—That it is a subject of serious consideration how far the observance of the Lord's Supper, as at present in many cases in practice, is adapted to effect the end for which it is designed. That according to the experience of this Conference of ministers, the too frequent recurrence of this rite is calculated to diminish its solemnity which it is so important to sustain. That in all such cases, therefore, it seems most desirable, that congregations, in free and affectionate consultation with their ministers, should, at the earliest period, devise measures in regard to the suitable times, and most appropriate forms, of administering the rite of the Lord's Supper.

VI.—That it is desirable that an Annual Letter from the proposed 'Christian Union,' to the Churches included in it, on a subject to be determined at the yearly meeting of the Union, shall be prepared by a minister appointed for this purpose, on a given subject; such Letter to be read at the next Annual Meeting, and, if approved, printed for circulation among the Churches.

VII.—That it is desirable that Statistical Returns of the state of our Churches, and their various institutions, should be sent to the proposed Union at its annual meeting, and that such returns should be sought through the minister, or congregational officers.

VIII.—That this Conference would recommend to the serious consideration of both ministers and people, in our denomination, the importance of meetings in the week for religious improvement."

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WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH.—At a time when efforts are made in this country to restore the use and authority of the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism, it is pleasant to find that reverence for the productions of that Assembly is not on the increase elsewhere. The *Bible Christian* (of Belfast, Ireland,) for December last, contains a short notice respecting the University of Glasgow, in Scotland, which we copy.

"At a meeting of the Senate of the University of Glasgow, held on Tuesday the 7th of November, a series of resolutions recommending the abrogation (except in cases of Divinity Professors) of the law requiring Professors to subscribe the Westminster Confession of Faith, and to conform to the worship and discipline of the Church of Scotland, was adopted. The motion for their adoption was made by Dr.

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Thomas Thomson, Professor of Chemistry in the University, and seconded by General Sir Thomas Brisbane, Dean of Faculties in the University. The Professors opposed to the abrogation of the obnoxious law put forth all their strength; but in vain. After a discussion of great length, the resolutions were carried by eleven votes to seven. The Lord Rector of the University (Mr. Fox Maule) could vote only in case the votes on both sides were equal; but he spoke strongly in favor of the repeal of the law. We were glad to observe the names of our countrymen, Doctors Thompson and Reid, the Professors of Mathematics and Ecclesiastical History, on the side of religious free-pom. Had all the Professors been able to attend, and had they voted according to their previously and subsequently expressed opinions on the subject, the votes would have stood—for the resolutions, *sixteen*; against them, only *nine*."

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PROGRESS OF TEMPERANCE AND PEACE PRINCIPLES.—The *Bible Christian*, from which, we have just quoted, in an article entitled "A Glance at the Past Year," speaks of two great movements in terms which we rejoice to repeat.

"We cannot conclude this article without briefly expressing our satisfaction at the success which has crowned the benevolent labors of two philanthropic institutions. The cause of total abstinence, under the fostering care of a country's benefactor, has been rapidly gaining ground. The past year has added thousands to his peaceful ranks, and has seen concord, competency, harmony, and happiness, restored to many families that intemperance had steeped in the depths of poverty and misery. Anti-war principles, too, we rejoice, are becoming daily more popular, and more generally received, and men are leaguering themselves together to discountenance the horrid art. Though nation has been at war with nation, and intestine feuds have banished, for a time, order, peace and safety from many countries, yet we trust to see a better state of things, when that mighty engine, public opinion, can be properly directed against such barbarous practices."

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MISS MARTINEAU.—The interest which many persons in this country feel in this lady as her personal friends, and which many others entertain towards her as an accomplished writer, prompts us to copy the following article, which we find in the *London Inquirer*. It will be remembered that a pension from Government was offered, and even pressed upon Miss Martineau; which she declined, lest it should impair her future independence of action. In consequence of her

decision upon this proposal, although she was then suffering from protracted illness, with but narrow means of support, a subscription was commenced—not, we believe, among her immediate friends, but among those who admired the strength and purity of her principles—which resulted in raising the sum of £1,358, or about \$6600, which was invested for her benefit. The note which we copy contains her acknowledgments, with information also respecting her state of health, which we regret to learn continued with so little improvement.

“The following letter has been sent round to each subscriber to the fund of £1,358 odd, lately presented to Miss Martineau, in consequence of her declining Lord Melbourne’s offer of a pension:— ‘To the Contributors to a Testimonial to H. Martineau. My dear Friends,—To reach you individually from my retirement is not easy; and to convey to you the feelings with which I accept your kindness is impossible; yet I cannot but attempt to present to each of you my acknowledgments, and the comfort that I feel, from day to day, in the honor and independence which you have conferred upon me. By your generous testimony to my past services, you have set me free from all personal considerations in case of my becoming capable of future exertion. The assurance which I possess of your esteem and sympathy will be a stimulus to labor, if I find that I have still work to do; and, if I remain in my present useless condition, it will be a solace to me under suffering, and a cordial under the depressions of illness and confinement. I am, with affectionate gratitude, your friend and servant,—Harriet Martineau. Tynemouth, Oct. 22nd, 1843.’”

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UNITARIAN LECTURES IN LONDON.—We were glad to find the following notice prefixed to the December number of the (London) *Christian Reformer*.

“In conformity with the arrangements of the Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, a Course of Lectures will be commenced in the Chapel in Little Portland Street, Regent Street, on the second or third Sunday in January, 1844, and be continued on successive Sunday Evenings. They will be delivered by several Ministers of London and its vicinity, assisted by some of their brethren in the country, whose names and subjects will be announced when the arrangements are complete; and their object will be to enforce the evidence and illustrate the value of Unitarian Christianity, in relation particularly to some of the important questions and topics in religion which now agitate the public mind, and are attended by so much division of opinion in Established and Dissenting Churches.”